

# WORKFORCE OBSERVATIONS FOR NORTHWEST WISCONSIN COUNTIES

NOVEMBER 2002



State of Wisconsin  
Department of Workforce Development

## Northwest Wisconsin employment sets all-time high for October

The unemployment rate in Northwest Wisconsin was less than both the state and national rates in October. The unemployment rate for the ten-county region of Northwest Wisconsin declined from 4.0 percent in September to 3.9 percent in October. The current rate is below the unadjusted rate in the state of Wisconsin of 4.1 percent and the national rate of 5.3 percent. Seasonally adjusted the state unemployment rate was 4.9 percent while the national rate was 5.7 percent.

Six of the northwest counties were among the 40 statewide that reported a reduction in unemployment rate in October. Two counties, Bayfield and Sawyer, showed no change in unemployment and two counties, Burnett and Washburn, reported an increase.

The trend in most counties produced lower unemployment rates as jobs increased and the number of jobless declined. In Northwest Wisconsin, total employment in October was 300 higher than in September and the number of jobless dropped by 100.

Most of the labor force changes reflect seasonal trends that occur every October. Typically, employment is high in October as jobs resume with school districts or school related services. School bus drivers, cafeteria workers, maintenance crews and other non-teaching staff return to work in September and into October but because of delayed payrolls the employment increases are often not apparent until October.

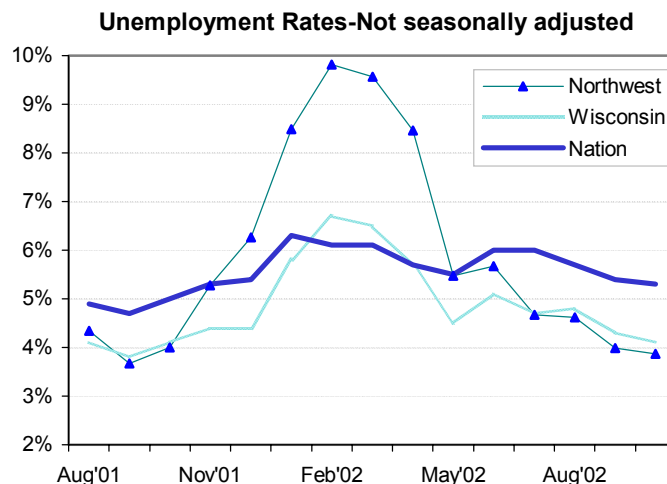
At the same time, many construction workers, on

the jobs since May, work to complete projects; temporary workers in cranberry bogs and orchards are finishing their seasonal work; and, wreath and garland makers begin production. It is the jobs with wreath manufacturers that compensate for job losses from resorts and restaurants as tourists fade from the region. Wreath and garland jobs are most prevalent in Price and Sawyer counties although smaller operations exist in nearly every county. These additional jobs boosted manufacturing employment by 290 in October and should add more jobs as production increase in November.

It should be noted that employment in the northwest is at an all-time high for October. Nearly 90,000 residents were employed in October, out of a total labor force of 93,500. So, even though there are 3,600 unemployed, roughly the same as one year ago, it is a smaller share of the total labor force. The unemployment rate declined because the share of unemployed in the labor force declined.

Only five of the region's ten counties set record employment levels, however. That includes Douglas with 22,250 employed, Taylor with 10,740 workers, Sawyer with 10,240, Washburn with 7,770, and Rusk with 6,940 employed. Surprisingly, October unemployment rates did not set new record lows.

The unemployment rate in Douglas of 3.6 percent was down from one year earlier but higher than in the late 1990s. In Taylor, the unemployment rate of 3.0 percent was higher than in any October since



	Aug'01	Sep'01	Oct'01	Aug'02	Sep'02	Oct'02
Northwest	4.3%	3.7%	4.0%	4.6%	4.0%	3.9%
Wisconsin	4.1%	3.8%	4.1%	4.8%	4.3%	4.1%
Nation	4.9%	4.7%	5.0%	5.7%	5.4%	5.3%

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1998 as was the rate in Sawyer County of 3.4 percent. In Washburn County the 4.2 percent was unchanged from one year ago which was also the highest since 1998. In Rusk County the 4.4 percent unemployment rate was down from last October but higher than in any previous year since 1997. In Burnett County, the unemployment rate increased from 3.7 percent in September to 4.0 percent in October

as employment declined to 6,840. Meanwhile, in Bayfield County, the unemployment rate was unchanged at 3.6 percent even though employment declined to 7,370. In Ashland County a drop in employment coincided with a reduction in the number of unemployed and a lower unemployment rate of 5.5 percent. In Iron County, an increase in employment triggered lower unemployment of 4.8 percent.

<b>October 2002 Estimates Not seasonally adjusted</b>											
	Wisconsin	Ashland	Bayfield	Burnett	Douglas	Iron	Price	Rusk	Sawyer	Taylor	Washburn
<b>Civilian Labor Force*</b>	3,054,200	8,150	7,650	7,130	23,080	3,430	7,000	7,260	10,600	11,080	8,120
Employed	2,928,200	7,700	7,370	6,840	22,250	3,270	6,740	6,940	10,240	10,740	7,770
Unemployed	126,000	440	280	290	830	170	260	320	360	330	340
Unemployment rate(%)	4.1%	5.5%	3.6%	4.0%	3.6%	4.8%	3.8%	4.4%	3.4%	3.0%	4.2%
<b>Total jobs, all industries**</b>	2,868,320	8,910	4,200	4,670	19,750	2,490	6,620	6,150	7,670	9,410	6,240
Construction & Mining	134,040	380	290	290	1,170	370	240	230	430	460	330
Manufacturing	570,600	1,700	200	1,020	1,200	510	2,730	2,300	840	3,270	1,140
Transportation & Pbl.Util.	133,040	220	260	150	2,700	70	130	220	190	570	240
Wholesale Trade	136,540	160	30	30	1,240	60	130	140	130	490	170
Retail Trade	511,320	1,620	800	990	3,990	580	1,030	770	1,900	1,460	1,350
Finance,Ins,Real Estate	153,820	360	140	170	510	40	210	130	310	380	210
Services	803,980	2,470	940	770	5,560	490	1,180	940	1,960	1,660	1,380
Government	424,990	2,010	1,540	1,270	3,380	380	970	1,430	1,910	1,120	1,430

<b>Change from previous month</b>											
<b>Civilian Labor Force*</b>	4,900	-110	-70	-130	-60	20	220	80	100	100	20
Employed	9,700	-70	-70	-150	-20	20	230	110	100	110	0
Unemployed	-4,700	-40	0	20	-40	-10	-10	-30	10	-10	20
Unemployment rate(%)	-0.2%	-0.4%	0.0%	0.3%	-0.2%	-0.2%	-0.2%	-0.5%	0.0%	-0.2%	0.2%
<b>Total jobs, all industries**</b>	14,060	-10	-120	-120	70	20	210	50	70	20	20
Construction & Mining	-1,590	10	-10	0	-30	-10	0	-10	0	-10	30
Manufacturing	-2,240	60	0	-30	0	30	200	0	50	0	-10
Transportation & Pbl.Util.	780	-10	0	0	-20	0	0	10	0	0	0
Wholesale Trade	-120	0	0	0	-20	0	0	0	0	10	0
Retail Trade	2,960	-10	-30	-60	-10	0	0	0	-90	-20	-60
Finance,Ins,Real Estate	120	0	0	-10	10	0	-10	0	0	0	0
Services	-3,990	-100	-90	-30	70	20	-10	10	100	0	-50
Government	18,140	50	20	20	70	-10	20	30	20	50	130

<b>Change from one year ago</b>											
<b>Civilian Labor Force*</b>	61,200	260	190	-280	200	-20	120	210	610	610	110
Employed	57,400	200	190	-250	350	-40	100	230	590	570	110
Unemployed	3,800	60	0	-30	-150	10	20	-20	30	30	10
Unemployment rate(%)	0.0%	0.6%	-0.1%	-0.2%	-0.7%	0.4%	0.2%	-0.4%	0.1%	0.1%	0.0%
<b>Total jobs, all industries**</b>	21,860	0	160	-260	710	-60	-20	70	530	320	10
Construction & Mining	1,470	-10	20	20	90	20	20	10	20	-10	30
Manufacturing	-9,370	-80	0	-10	-70	20	30	40	-30	160	-20
Transportation & Pbl.Util.	-1,290	-60	10	0	160	0	0	0	0	30	-10
Wholesale Trade	-1,570	-10	-10	0	50	0	-10	10	0	30	10
Retail Trade	3,650	-20	50	10	140	10	10	10	200	0	0
Finance,Ins,Real Estate	2,980	10	-10	-10	-10	0	0	0	20	10	-10
Services	25,380	-110	-10	-120	340	0	-10	10	320	80	20
Government	620	290	100	-140	20	-100	-50	-10	-10	20	-10

\* Includes participants residing in area. \*\* Includes employment with employers located in area. Estimates are NOT seasonally adjusted. Current month estimates are preliminary. Totals may not add due to rounding. Calculations based on unrounded numbers.

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Direct questions and comments to: **Beverly Gehrke, Labor Market Analyst**  
 Hayward Job Center, 15618 Wind Rose Lane, Suite 108, Hayward, Wisconsin 54843  
 715-634-5289 715-634-6094(FAX) e-mail: [Beverly.Gehrke@dwd.state.wi.us](mailto:Beverly.Gehrke@dwd.state.wi.us)